

State of California

Department of Consumer Affairs

"To protect and serve consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace."

Strategic Plan

Updated September 2006



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Our Mission:

To protect and serve consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace.

Our Vision:

To be the recognized leader in providing innovative services that educate and empower consumers to make informed decisions. Consumers, licensees and businesses will have a safe, fair, and competitive marketplace.

Our Values:

As a government agency dedicated to protecting consumers and regulating a variety of professions and businesses, the success and effectiveness of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) depends on:

- Serving our stakeholders with committed, knowledgeable, well-trained employees.
- Providing prompt and fair investigation and adjudication of violations of law.
- Educating consumers so they are capable of making informed decisions in a complex and changing marketplace.
- Licensing applicants to ensure job markets are easily accessible.
- Creating productive partnerships with consumers, licensees, and businesses.
- Developing automation systems that provide efficient and effective support to consumers, DCA employees, licensees, and businesses.
- Improving consumer access to critical health and safety information and educating them on the health benefits of clean air.

Goals and Objectives:

The Department of Consumer Affairs has adopted the following strategic goals for 2006-07. As part of the ongoing planning and monitoring process, the stated goals will be reevaluated and adjusted, as necessary, to meet business needs.

Goal One:

Empower consumers to make informed decisions about the marketplace

- 1.1 Conduct a baseline assessment of consumer awareness levels and issues, identify target audiences, and develop and distribute information and outreach material to targeted audiences, with particular emphasis on under-served and non-English speaking populations (***Completed***).
 - 1.2 Ensure DCA's Consumer Information Center is appropriately staffed during peak call days and hours (***Completed***).
 - 1.3 Establish an advisory committee of stakeholders to make recommendations for enhancing the ease of use of DCA's Website (***Completed***).
 - 1.4 Create a committee within DCA to make recommendations for improving departmental publications, including: continual updating of publications, developing more effective distribution and inventory methods, and ensuring that all DCA entities are informed of the changes (***Completed***).
 - 1.5 Institute a DCA on-line newsletter that informs consumers on relevant marketplace issues (***Completed***).
 - 1.6 Ensure consumers have access to information on how to best protect their personal information and right to privacy (***Completed/Ongoing***).
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Goal Two:

Develop a highly productive and well-informed workforce

- 2.1 Conduct a formal training needs-assessment for all DCA staff.
- 2.2 Train DCA management on techniques and processes for evaluating staff performance (***Completed***).

- 2.3 Evaluate and enhance DCA's internal communication to keep staff informed of departmental issues (**Completed**).
- 2.4 Conduct town hall meetings by the Executive Office for all DCA staff (**Completed**).
- 2.5 Create an employee incentive and recognition program (**Completed**).
- 2.6 Establish regular forums for DCA managers to discuss issues of interest (**New**).

Goal Three:

Develop an organizational structure and processes that deliver responsive, effective, and innovative services

- 3.1 Conduct a conference for staff of DCA's regulatory boards, bureaus, and divisions on DCA's centralized administrative services (**New**).
- 3.2 Develop a process to ensure DCA's products and services meet or exceed the needs and expectations of clients, stakeholders, and staff.
- 3.3 Develop a workforce and succession plan to ensure that DCA has adequate staffing and skill levels in response to employee retirement and attrition.

Goal Four:

Develop and maintain partnerships with public and private organizations that share common interests

- 4.1 Identify and partner with federal, state, and local government agencies; business and trade associations; and public interest groups to coordinate and advance similar goals and objectives. Establish liaisons and forums to communicate issues of mutual concern (**Completed/Ongoing**).
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Goal Five:

Enhance licensing processes and outcomes

- 5.1 Review and improve existing application processes to ensure the timely, efficient, and accurate processing of all applications (***Completed***).
 - 5.2 Expand iLicensing to all regulatory boards and bureaus.
 - 5.3 Ensure all licensing examinations and resulting decisions are valid.
 - 5.4 Explore options for consolidating similar licensing types (***Completed***).
 - 5.5 Establish performance measures for all bureaus for key licensing activities (***New***).
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Goal Six:

Enhance enforcement processes and outcomes

- 6.1 Review and enhance both manual and online complaint intake and referral processes.
 - 6.2 Develop uniform guidelines for prioritizing consumer complaints (***Completed***).
 - 6.3 Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the Division of Investigation's services (***Completed***).
 - 6.4 Evaluate alternative options for pursuing administrative and criminal sanctions against licensees and registrants.
 - 6.5 Develop guidelines to educate licensees about current standards of practice (***Completed***).
 - 6.6 Increase public awareness of regulatory board and bureau enforcement actions through the appropriate media and other outreach programs (***Completed/Ongoing***).
 - 6.7 Establish performance measures for all bureaus for key enforcement activities (***New***).
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Goal Seven:

***Leverage existing and emerging technologies
to support the Department's business goals and objectives***

- 7.1 Develop and establish an online, one-stop shop for all information, forms and applications for consumers, businesses, applicants and licensees (***Completed***).
- 7.2 Establish an Information Technology Governance Council to develop DCA information technology policies and coordinate initiatives (***Completed***).
- 7.3 Create a pilot program to automate a business process that enhances the delivery of a centralized service provided by DCA to its regulatory boards and bureaus.
- 7.4 Enhance the data reporting capabilities of the Consumer Affairs System.
- 7.5 Expand the Applicant Tracking System to all interested regulatory boards and bureaus.
- 7.6 Provide audio and video conferencing capabilities from DCA headquarters to enhance public access (***New/Completed***).
- 7.7 Implement an asset management system (***New***).
- 7.8 Offer centralized imaging and file room services to all interested regulatory boards (***New***).

Goal Eight:

***Improve consumer access to critical health and safety information, including
the health consequences of air pollution***

- 8.1 Develop DCA as a resource on critical health and safety issues impacting consumers (***Completed/Ongoing***).
- 8.2 Distribute information to consumers regarding the clean air health benefits derived from the Smog Check Program (***Completed/Ongoing***).
- 8.3 Remove 18,500 high polluting vehicles from California's roads in Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Our Stakeholders - Their Needs and Wants:

The success of DCA's ability to effectively implement its mission depends on a clear understanding of the needs of our stakeholders. Our stakeholders include:

- Consumers, who seek accurate and timely information on marketplace trends, practices and protection from unscrupulous business practices.
- Licensees, who seek expeditious and accurate services, fair administration of the law, and timely and accurate communication on issues of interest to them.
- Applicants for licensure, who seek expeditious and accurate services, fair administration of the application process, and timely and accurate communication on issues of concern.
- Employees of DCA, who seek clear direction, recognition by management, and training programs to better serve our stakeholders and grow professionally.
- DCA regulatory boards and bureaus, which seek open communication, the efficient delivery of services from DCA, and a timely response to issues of concern.
- Other state agencies, which seek accurate and timely information to make informed decisions.
- The Legislature, which seeks timely action on issues of concern, accountability, and demonstrated effectiveness and relevancy concerning the professions and businesses regulated by DCA.
- The business community, which seeks a fair marketplace, fairness and consistency in the administration of the law, and responsiveness from DCA when changes occur in the marketplace.

Environmental Scan:

The ability of DCA to create and properly execute its mission, as contained in this strategic plan, required an analysis of key external forces that influence the way DCA functions. Some of these external forces include:

- Fiscal Challenges – Government must do the best job possible with the resources available. It also means that, to the extent possible, DCA shall adopt the best practices from the public and private sectors.

- Changes in Technology – Technology is constantly evolving and changing. Properly implemented, technology can serve as a powerful tool by improving communication with stakeholders, eliminate paperwork, and enhance employee productivity.
- Business and the Economy – As an agency that licenses and registers 2.3 million people in a variety of businesses and professions, the business community expects DCA to communicate with and educate licensees and registrants, operate expeditiously and efficiently, and partner with them to protect California consumers.
- Changing Demographics – California’s population continues to grow, age, and diversify every day. The public also demands more service, more information, and the speedy resolution of issues facing them.